

Methods and Systems for Scheduling Resources in a
Telecommunication System

TECHNICAL FIELD

5 The present invention relates generally to telecommunication systems. Embodiments of the present invention relate to the scheduling of resources in a telecommunication system.

BACKGROUND

10 Radio access technologies for cellular mobile networks are continuously being evolved to meet future demands for high data rates, improved coverage and improved capacity. Examples of recent evolutions of the wideband code-division multiple access (WCDMA) technology are the High-Speed Packet Access (HSPA) protocols. Currently, further evolutions of the third generation (3G) systems,
15 3G Long Term Evolution (LTE), including new access technologies and new architectures, are being developed within the 3rd Generation Partnership Project (3GPP) standardisation body.

 A main objective of LTE systems is to provide a flexible access technology that can be used in existing frequency
20 allocations and in new frequency allocations. Also, LTE systems should enable the use of different duplex solutions. For example, both frequency division duplex (FDD) and time division duplex (TDD), where the uplink and downlink are separated in frequency and in time, respectively, should be supported to provide usage in
25 both paired and unpaired spectrum.

 An access technology based on Orthogonal Frequency Division Multiplexing (OFDM) for the downlink and Single Carrier Frequency Division Multiple Access (SC-FDMA) for the uplink, for example, allows such flexible spectrum solutions.

30 Since the LTE concept is being designed to support fast scheduling in frequency and time both for the uplink and the downlink, the resource assignment in time and frequency should be preferably adjustable to the users' momentary traffic demand and

channel variations. In the LTE uplink it is possible to schedule several users in one Time Transmission Interval (TTI) by assigning different frequency segments to different users. To maintain the single carrier structure, each user should only receive contiguous
5 assignments in frequency as illustrated in FIG. 1.

Referring now to FIG. 2, a scheduler 202 in an evolved Node B (base station) 204 may perform resource assignment. Scheduling resources among two or more users in the uplink is complicated by the fact that the scheduler 202 is not automatically aware of each
10 user's uplink data and resource demand. That is, for example, the scheduler 202 may not be aware of how much data there is in the transmit buffers of each user's mobile terminal 206 (e.g., mobile phone, portable digital assistant, or any other mobile terminal). Mobile terminal 206 may also be referred to as user equipment (UE).
15 In order to support fast scheduling, the scheduler 202 would have to be made aware of the UE's momentary traffic demands (e.g., the transmit buffer status).

The basic uplink scheduling concept is illustrated in FIG.2. Typically, to inform the uplink (UL) scheduler 202 of the UE's
20 momentary traffic demands, the system 200 supports (i) a dedicated scheduling request (SR) channel and (ii) buffer status reports. Alternatively, a synchronized random access channel (RACH) can be used for the same purpose.

The scheduler 202 monitors each UE's traffic demands and
25 assigns resources accordingly. The scheduler 202 informs a UE (e.g., UE 206) of a scheduling decision by transmitting resource assignments 208 to the UE. In addition, there is a possibility to configure a UE to transmit channel sounding reference signals to enable the evolved Node B (eNodeB) to do broad band channel
30 estimation for fast link adaptation and channel dependent scheduling.

A synchronized UE also has the opportunity to use, as a fallback solution, the Random Access Channel (RACH) to request a

UL resource. In general, however, the RACH is intended mostly for non-synchronized UEs. In the dedicated SR channel approach, each active UE is assigned a dedicated channel for transmitting messages that indicate to the eNodeB that the UE requires a UL resource. Such a message is referred to as a scheduling request (SR) 210. The benefit with this method is that no UE identifier (ID) has to be transmitted, since the UE is identified by virtue of the "channel" it uses. Furthermore, in contrast to the contention based approach, no intra-cell collisions will occur.

In response to receiving an SR 210, the scheduler 202 may issue to the UE a scheduling grant (SG) 208. That is, the scheduler may select the resource(s) (e.g., time slot and/or frequency) the UE shall use and communicate this information to the UE. The scheduler 202 may also select, with support from the link adaptation function, a transport block size, a modulation scheme, coding scheme and an antenna scheme (i.e., the link adaptation is performed in the eNodeB and the selected transport format is signalled together with information on the user ID to the UE). The scheduling grant addresses a UE and not a specific radio bearer. In its simplest form, the scheduling grant is valid only for the next UL TTI. However, to reduce the amount of control signalling required, several proposals with alternative durations are possible.

After transmitting an initial SR, the UE may transmit a more detailed buffer status report to the scheduler 202. The buffer status report may be transmitted in-band (e.g., the buffer status report may be included as part of a medium access control (MAC) header). It is a common view in, for example, 3GPP that the buffer status report should contain more information than is contained in the initial SR.

The above described procedure is further illustrated in FIG. 3. As shown in FIG. 3, a UE 302 having data to transmit to an eNodeB 304 first transmits an SR 306 to the eNodeB 304, which SR

306 is then processed by an uplink scheduler 308 of eNodeB 304. In response to SR 306, uplink scheduler 308 transmits an SG (e.g., resource assignments) 310 to UE 302. Thereafter, UE 302 transmits data 312 to eNodeB 304 together with a buffer status report 314, which report is processed by the uplink scheduler 308. As discussed above, buffer status report 314 may be transmitted in-band with data 312.

SUMMARY

It is an object to provide improved systems and methods for triggering uplink scheduling requests in a telecommunication system.

In one aspect, the invention provides a method for transmitting scheduling requests from a mobile terminal (or "UE") to a base station. In some embodiments, the method starts with the UE transmitting a first scheduling request (SR) to the base station in response to data becoming available for transmission to the base station. After transmitting the first SR, the UE receives a scheduling grant (SG) transmitted from the base station. In response to receiving the SG, the UE transmits to the base station transmit buffer status information. After transmitting the buffer status information to the base station, but prior to transmitting any subsequent SRs to the base station and while at least some of the data is waiting to be transmitted to the base station, the UE: (1) determines whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred, and, if a triggering event has occurred, then the UE transmits a second SR to the base station at a next opportunity in response to determining that the triggering event has occurred; otherwise, if a triggering event has not occurred, then, the UE transmits to the base station at the next opportunity a message indicating that a triggering event has not occurred in response to determining that the triggering event has not occurred.

In some embodiments, the step of determining whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred includes: (a) determining whether additional data that became available for transmission to the base station after the first SR was
5 transmitted has a higher priority than the initial data; (b) determining whether the amount of time that has elapsed since the first SR was transmitted exceeds a threshold; and/or (c) determining whether the difference between the current amount of data in the transmit buffer and a previous, non-zero amount of
10 data that was in the transmit buffer exceeds a threshold. In this or other embodiments, the step of determining whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred includes: comparing the transmit buffer status information transmitted to the base station with new information concerning the status of the transmit buffer.

15 In some embodiments, the message indicating that a triggering event has not occurred is a one bit message and the SR is also a one bit message. Additionally, in some embodiments, the thresholds may be configured in the UE by the base station through radio resource control (RRC) signaling. Further, in some
20 embodiments the UE is configured so that it transmits an SR at the next available opportunity every time that data arrives to an empty transmit buffer in the UE.

In another aspect, the invention relates to an improved mobile terminal. In some embodiments the improved mobile terminal
25 includes a transmit buffer and a data processor. The data processor may be configured to cause the mobile terminal to transmit a first scheduling request (SR) to a base station in response to data arriving at an empty transmit buffer in the mobile terminal and cause the mobile terminal to transmit to the
30 base station status information concerning the transmit buffer in response to receiving a scheduling grant (SG) from the base station. In some embodiments, the data processor may further be configured to determine whether a scheduling request triggering

event has occurred; cause the mobile terminal transmit a second SR to the base station at a next opportunity in response to determining that a triggering event has occurred; and cause the mobile terminal to transmit to the base station, at a next opportunity, a message indicating that a triggering event has not occurred in response to determining that no triggering event has occurred. Preferably, these three steps are performed while at least some of the first data is waiting to be transmitted to the base station and after the UE transmits the buffer status information, but prior to the UE transmitting any subsequent SRs to the base station.

In some embodiments the improved mobile terminal includes: means for transmitting a first SR to a base station in response to an empty transmit buffer in the mobile terminal receiving data; means for receiving an SG transmitted from the base station; means for transmitting to the base station status information concerning the transmit buffer status in response to receiving the SG; triggering event detections means for determining whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred; and means for transmitting to the base station, at a next opportunity, a second SR in response to determining that a scheduling request triggering event has occurred. In some embodiments, the triggering event detection means is configured to perform the determination while at least some of the data is waiting to be transmitted to the base station.

In another aspect, the invention relates to a method performed by a base station for granting uplink resources to mobile terminals. In some embodiments, the base station: allocates an uplink resource to a first mobile terminal, thereby enabling the first mobile terminal to transmit data to the base station; receives an SR from a second mobile terminal while the first mobile terminal is utilizing the uplink resource; reallocates the uplink resource to the second mobile terminal in

response to receiving the SR; receives from the second mobile terminal information related to the priority of the data in the second mobile station that is waiting to be transmitted to the base station; compares the priority of the first mobile terminal's data to the priority of the second mobile terminal's data using respective priority information; reallocates the uplink resource to the first mobile terminal in response to determining that the first mobile terminal has higher priority data than the second mobile terminal; receives a subsequent SR from the second mobile terminal, where the subsequent SR is received after receiving the priority information from the second mobile terminal but before receiving any other priority information from the second mobile terminal; and reallocates the uplink resource to the second mobile terminal in response to receiving the subsequent SR.

15 In another aspect, the invention relates to an improved base station. In some embodiments, the improved base station includes means for communicating with a plurality of mobile terminals; means for allocating an uplink resource to one of the mobile terminals based on respective buffer status data transmissions from the terminals; means for reallocating the uplink resources to another one of the plurality of terminals based on receipt of a single bit message indicating a change of buffer status data of the other terminal.

25 In yet another aspect, the invention relates to a telecommunication system comprising an improved mobile terminal and improved base station.

The above and other aspects and embodiments of the present invention are described below with reference to the accompanying drawings.

30 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF DRAWINGS

The accompanying drawings, which are incorporated herein and form part of the specification, illustrate various embodiments of the present invention.

FIG. 1 schematically illustrates resource allocation to different users in an SC-FDMA system.

FIG. 2 illustrates uplink scheduling in an LTE system.

FIG. 3 illustrates a scheme for providing to a UE a resource
5 for data transmission.

FIG. 4 illustrates an improved scheduling message flow between an eNodeB and two UEs.

FIG. 5 illustrates a further improved scheduling message flow between an eNodeB and two UEs.

10 FIGS. 6a and 6b illustrate a process according to an embodiment of the invention.

FIG. 7 is a functional block diagram illustrating some of the components of a mobile terminal.

15 FIG. 8 is a functional block diagram illustrating some of the components of an uplink scheduler.

FIG. 9 is a flow chart illustrating a process according to an embodiment of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

One possible scheduling request scheme is to define an SR as
20 being a single bit message where the single bit (i.e., the "signal request bit") has been set to a particular predefined value (e.g., set to "1") and to configure the UEs such that the UEs transmit an SR to the scheduler whenever: (1) the UE has data to transmit (e.g., the UE has data in a transmit buffer) and (2) the UE does
25 not have an uplink resource allocation for transmitting the data to the eNodeB. However, a potential drawback of this approach is illustrated by the example scheduling message flow shown in FIG. 4.

The example shown in FIG. 4 assumes there are two synchronized UEs (i.e., UE1 and UE2), neither of which initially
30 has an uplink resource allocation for data transmission. It is further assumed that the UEs have a dedicated SR channel.

As shown in FIG. 4, when data arrives in the transmit buffer of UE1, UE1 provides to the scheduler notification of this event by transmitting an SR (e.g., a "1") to the scheduler using its next SR opportunity. In response, the scheduler grants UE1 some resources for data transmission and transmits an SG to the UE1. In response, the UE1 transmits a buffer status report to the eNodeB. The UE1 may also transmit data to the eNodeB, depending on the UL resources allocated to it.

As further shown in FIG. 4, when UE2 has data for transmission, UE2 transmits an SR (e.g., a "1") at its next SR opportunity. For the sake of this example, we shall assume that UE2's data has a lower priority than UE1's data. In response to receiving the SR transmitted by UE2, the scheduler, which at this point in time does not know that UE2's data has a lower priority than UE1's data, grants UE2 some resources blindly. UE2 uses the allocated resource to transmit a buffer status report containing QoS information and some data depending on the size of the allocation. Using the buffer status reports transmitted by UE1 and UE2, respectively, the scheduler compares UE1's buffer status to UE2's buffer status and, based on the comparison, prioritizes the data from UE1 because the comparison indicates the low priority nature of UE2's data. Because the data from UE1 is prioritized, the scheduler does not schedule the UE2 further, thus preventing UE2 from transmitting its data. Consequently, because UE2 has data to send, UE2 will continue to transmit an SR in each of the TTI's in which it has an SR opportunity.

Relying on the data buffer report last transmitted from UE2, which reports indicated that the UE2 had only low priority data waiting for transmission, the scheduler ignores the SRs transmitted from UE2. The scheduler ignores these SRs even after the UE2 subsequently has high priority data to send because, other than through transmitting a buffer status report, there is no way for UE2 to notify the scheduler that it has higher priority data.

Accordingly, in some cases, the scheduler may not be immediately aware of new high priority data arriving at UE2's transmit buffer.

This problem could be avoided if the scheduler were configured to grant some uplink resources to UE2 every once in a while, thereby providing the UE2 with opportunities to transmit to the scheduler a buffer status report indicating the new high priority data. However, if there are many users, this solution is quite costly in terms of resources. Another solution is to extend the SR from one bit to more than one bit so that the SR can contain information regarding data priority. However, this solution creates significant overhead for the SR channel, particularly if there are many priority levels. Embodiments of the present invention overcome the above described problem without the disadvantages suffered by these two solutions.

Embodiments of the present invention define an alternative SR triggering mechanism that is based on changes in transmit buffer status. With such an alternative triggering mechanism, the problems described above can be solved without increasing the SR from one bit to several bits and without periodically scheduling UEs to transmit buffer status reports.

According to embodiments of the present invention, the UEs are configured to transmit an SR only when certain predefined conditions are met, such as, for example, changes in the UE's transmit buffer content compared to what has been reported previously or what has been transmitted previously. For example, a predefined condition may be met whenever data arrives in the UE's transmit buffer and the data has a higher priority than the priority of the previously reported data (or transmitted data). The changes in buffer status that trigger an SR are typically configured through radio resource control (RRC) signaling.

In some embodiments, the UEs are configured to transmit an SR only when all of the following are true: (1) the UE has no uplink grant; (2) the UE has data to transmit to the eNodeB; and (3) the

buffer status has "changed" since the last acknowledged buffer report was transmitted by the UE or the last acknowledged transmission was transmitted by the UE. In these embodiments, the scheduler is configured so that it will not ignore an SR from a UE
5 configured as described above.

In some embodiments, the buffer status is considered to have "changed" only if one or more of the following conditions are met: (1) higher prioritized data has arrived in buffer; (2) the buffer size increase exceeds a predetermined threshold (Threshold A); or
10 (3) the elapsed time since the transmission of the last SR exceeds a predetermined threshold (Threshold B). The thresholds A and B can typically be configured through RRC signaling. One exception to the above rule is that when data arrives to an empty buffer in the UE, the UE should always transmit an SR at the next SR
15 opportunity.

In the above examples, when a UE receives a UL scheduling grant from the scheduler, the scheduler is subsequently made aware of the UE's buffer content through regular buffer status reports transmitted by the UE. This could be a continuous buffer report
20 for each scheduled transmission. However, in some embodiments criteria are used for causing the UE to transmit buffer status reports. This means that if a UE is not granted further UL resources the latest acknowledged buffer report will be up-to date. It is also possible to use a variation of the above described SR
25 triggering rules in case the UE does not send regular buffer reports.

For example, assuming the UE employs strict priority between radio bearers (i.e., data from higher prioritised radio bearers is always transmitted before data from lower prioritised radio
30 bearers), then the scheduler will know that there is no higher priority data in the transmit buffer than what is being transmitted. In such a situation, the buffer status is considered to have "changed" only if one or more of the following conditions

are met: (1) higher prioritized data has arrived in the buffer; or
(2) the elapsed time since the last SR was transmitted exceeds a
threshold (Threshold B). As before, one exception to the rule is
that when data arrives to an empty buffer in the UE, the UE should
5 always transmit an SR at its next SR opportunity. The threshold B
is typically configured through RRC signaling.

Several alternatives and combinations of the examples above
can be constructed. The present invention provides an improvement
in that, instead of configuring the UE to transmit an SR whenever
10 the UE has data to transmit, the UE is configured to transmit an
SR only when it has data to transmit AND some other event has
occurred (e.g., a certain amount of time has elapsed since the
last SR was transmitted, the amount of data in the buffer grew by
at least a certain amount since the most recent transmission of
15 data or a status report, or the transmit buffer was empty just
prior to it receiving the data).

In some embodiments, a triggered but not yet transmitted SR
should be cancelled whenever the UE obtains a scheduling grant
from the eNodeB before the SR transmission opportunity. In these
20 cases, the UE will send high priority data first and optionally
include a detailed buffer status report. In any case, the eNodeB
is aware of the change even without obtaining a scheduling request.

Referring now to FIG. 5, FIG. 5 illustrates a message flow in
a system according to an embodiment of the invention, which system
25 includes two UEs (UE1 and UE2). The illustrated message flow
begins when UE1 receives high priority data in its transmit buffer.
As shown in FIG. 5, in response to this event, UE1 transmits an SR
to the eNodeB at its next SR opportunity.

In response, the eNodeB transmits an SG to UE1. In response
30 to the SG, UE1 may transmit a buffer report that indicates the
high priority of the data in UE1's transmit buffer. Some time
after UE1 transmits the buffer report, UE2 may receive data in its

transmit buffer, which event causes UE2 to transmit an SR at its next SR opportunity.

For the sake of this example, we shall assume that UE2's data has a lower priority than UE1's data. In response to receiving the SR transmitted by UE2, the eNodeB, which at this point in time does not know that UE2's data has a lower priority than UE1's data, grants UE2 some resources blindly. UE2 uses the allocated resource to transmit a buffer status report containing QoS information and some data depending on the size of the allocation. Based on the buffer status report, which indicates the low priority nature of UE2's data, the eNodeB prioritizes the data from UE1 and, thus, does not schedule the UE2 further, thereby preventing UE2 from transmitting its data (e.g., the eNodeB transmits to UE2 a Hybrid Automatic Repeat Request (HARQ) ACK for the transmission containing the buffer report and the UE2 stores the latest ACK'ed report).

However, rather than continue to transmit an SR at each subsequent SR opportunity, as is shown in FIG. 4, UE2 is configured so as to not transmit an SR until after one or more certain predefined events occur (e.g., the UE2 may transmit to the eNodeB the signal request bit with the bit set to the value of "0" instead of "1" until one of the events happen, as is shown in FIG. 5). Accordingly, UE2 is configured to check whether one or more certain events have occurred (such as the receipt of high priority data) prior to each subsequent SR opportunity so that, if one such event has occurred, the UE2 can transmit an SR at that next SR opportunity.

In this example, some time after UE2 transmitted the buffer status report, high priority data arrives in UE2's transmit buffer. The UE2 detects this event and, in response, transmits an SR (e.g., a "1") to the eNodeB. The UE2 may be configured to detect this event by comparing the last acknowledged buffer status report, which indicates the status of the transmit buffer at some previous

point in time, to a newly generated buffer status information that indicates the current status of the transmit buffer. The eNodeB is configured to respond to the SR by granting an uplink resource to UE2, as opposed to ignoring the SR, even though the eNodeB has not received from UE2 a new buffer status report indicating that UE2 now has higher priority data. Accordingly, in this manner, embodiments of the present invention solve the problem discussed in connection with FIG. 4.

Referring now to FIG. 6a, FIG. 6a is a flow chart illustrating a process 600, according to some embodiments of the invention, performed by a UE. Process 600 may begin in step 602. Process 600 assumes that the UE initially has no data to transmit to the eNodeB (e.g., the UE's transmit buffer is initially empty), accordingly, in step 602 the UE waits until data is placed in the transmit buffer. In response to the UE having data to send to the eNodeB, the UE transmits an SR to the eNodeB (step 604). In step 606, the UE receives an SG from the eNodeB. In step 608, the UE uses the resource allocated by the eNodeB to transmit to the eNodeB a buffer status report and/or some data depending on the allocated resource. In step 609, the UE may record a value representing the amount of data currently in its transmit buffer.

In step 610, the UE receives from the eNodeB a HARQ ACK for the transmission containing the buffer status report. In step 612, the UE stores the latest ACK'ed buffer status report (i.e., the report transmitted in step 608). In step 614, the UE determines whether it has data to send to the eNodeB (e.g., the UE determines whether its transmit buffer is empty). If it does not have data to send (e.g., the buffer is empty), process 600 may proceed back to step 602, otherwise it may proceed to step 616.

In step 616, the UE determines whether an SR triggering event has occurred. If so, process 600 proceeds back to step 604, otherwise process 600 may proceed to step 618. In step 618, at the very next SR transmission opportunity, the UE transmits to the

eNodeB a message indicating that a triggering event has not occurred (e.g., the UE transmits a one bit message to the eNodeB where the value of the bit is set to "0"). After step 618, process 600 may proceed back to step 616.

5 Referring now to FIG. 6b, FIG. 6b illustrates a process, according to some embodiments of the invention, for determining whether a triggering event has occurred. That is, FIG. 6b illustrates steps that may be performed in performing step 616 of process 600.

10 As shown in FIG. 6b, the process may begin in step 656, where the UE determines whether new data has arrived in the transmit buffer since a particular point in time. For example, the UE may determine whether new data has arrived in the transmit buffer since the last buffer status report was generated or since the
15 last time the UE performed step 616. If the UE determines that new data has arrived, then the process may proceed to step 658, otherwise it may proceed to step 662.

In step 658, the UE determines whether the new data has a higher priority than the data that was in the transmit buffer when
20 the new data arrived. The UE may determine this by comparing information in the buffer status report stored in step 612 to newly generated information reflecting the status of the current state of the transmit buffer. If the new data has a higher priority, then process may proceed to step 604 (i.e., the UE
25 transmits an SR to the eNodeB), otherwise the process may proceed to step 660.

In step 660, the UE determines whether the difference between the amount of data currently in the transmit buffer and the amount of data that was in the transmit buffer at a previous point in
30 time exceeds a threshold. For example, in step 660, the UE may find the difference between a value representing the amount of data currently in the transmit buffer and the value that was recorded in step 609 and compare the difference to the threshold

value. If the difference equals or exceeds the threshold, then the process may proceed to step 604, otherwise the process may proceed to step 662.

5 In step 662, the UE determines whether the amount of time that has elapsed since the last SR was transmitted exceeds a threshold. If so, the process may proceed to step 604, otherwise the process may proceed to step 618.

We will now discuss error cases that may occur.

10 Error Case 1: In this first error case, either (a) the eNodeB misinterprets an SR (e.g., the eNodeB detects that the signal request bit is set to a "0" instead of a "1") and will not grant a resource or (b) the resource assignment message cannot be decoded by the UE. To handle this situation, the UE is configured to transmit an SR in all SR occasions until a UL grant is obtained
15 (i.e., until the UE is given the opportunity to transmit data and/or a buffer status report).

Error Case 2: In the second error case, the eNodeB fails to decode the message containing the buffer status report or the initial data transmission. Waiting for the HARQ retransmission
20 could cause excessive delay. The scheduler repeats the UL grant: (1) until a reliable report is obtained if buffer reports are transmitted with each UL transmission; (2) if buffer reports are triggering with similar criterions as for the SR (the UE will have a buffer change compared with the latest acknowledged report and
25 continue to transmit reports until a reliable report is obtained); or (3) if no buffer reports are triggered new data is transmitted until the eNodeB is able to decode.

Error Case 3: In the third error case, the eNodeB detects the message containing the buffer report or the initial data
30 transmission but the HARQ ACK is misinterpreted as a NACK by the UE. In this situation, the UE performs a regular HARQ retransmission, which fails as the eNodeB does not expect any further transmission attempts. The UE stops after the maximum

number of transmission attempts. The UE does not need to perform another scheduling request if some subsequent transmission has succeeded. With the error handling in case 2, the eNodeB would have issued another grant if the transmission had failed.

5 Referring now to FIG. 7, FIG. 7 is functional block diagram of some components of a UE 700 according to an embodiment of the invention. As shown in FIG. 7, the UE may include: a transmit buffer 702 for buffering data to be transmitted to an eNodeB; a storage unit 704 for storing the last transmitted buffer status
10 report; a data processor 706 for executing software 708 for determining whether an SR should or should not be transmitted (i.e., software 708 may be configured to perform, among other steps, steps 616-622 of process 600) and for causing an SR to be transmitted if it determines that an SR should be transmitted; a
15 transmitter for wirelessly transmitting data to an eNodeB; and other elements.

Referring now to FIG. 8, FIG. 8 is functional block diagram of uplink resource scheduler 202 according to an embodiment of the invention. As shown in FIG. 8, scheduler 202 includes: a storage
20 unit 804 for storing buffer status reports 810; a data processor 806 for executing software 808. Software 808 is configured such that, when executed by data processor 806, software 808 causes the scheduler 202 to function as described above. That is, for
example, software 808 may cause the scheduler 202 to schedule
25 uplink resources based on a comparison of the buffer status of the UE's attempting to communicate with the eNodeB 240 and to respond to each SR. Although not shown, data processor 806 is coupled to a transmission means (e.g., transmit buffers and/or transmitters or the like) that enables the scheduler to communicate with UEs.

30 Referring now to FIG. 9, FIG. 9 is a flow chart illustrating a process 900 performed by a base station configured according to an embodiment of the invention. As illustrated in FIG. 9, in step 902 the base station allocates an uplink resource to a first UE

(UE1), thereby enabling UE1 to transmit data to the base station. In step 904, the base station receives an SR from a second UE (UE2) while UE1 is utilizing the uplink resource. In step 906, the base station reallocates the uplink resource to UE2 in response to receiving the SR. In step 908, the base station receives from UE2 information related to the priority of the data in UE2 that is waiting to be transmitted to the base station. In step 910, the base station compares the priority of UE1's data to the priority of UE2's data using the respective priority information. In step 912, the base station reallocates the uplink resource to UE1 in response to determining that UE1 has higher priority data than UE1. In step 914, the base station receives a subsequent SR from UE2, wherein the subsequent SR is received after receiving the priority information from UE2 and before receiving any other data priority information from UE2. In step 916, the base station reallocates the uplink resource to UE2 in response to receiving the subsequent SR.

One advantage of embodiments of the invention is that the scheduler in the base station (eNodeB) is provided with selected updates of the terminal's buffer status and appropriate quality of service (QoS) knowledge even with a single bit SR, while decreasing the UE power consumption for the scheduling request channel (in case ON/OFF keying is used).

While various embodiments/variations of the present invention have been described above, it should be understood that they have been presented by way of example only, and not limitation. Thus, the breadth and scope of the present invention should not be limited by any of the above-described exemplary embodiments. Further, unless stated, none of the above embodiments are mutually exclusive. Thus, the present invention may include any combinations and/or integrations of the features of the various embodiments.

Additionally, while the processes described above and illustrated in the drawings are shown as a sequence of steps, this was done solely for the sake of illustration. Accordingly, it is contemplated that some steps may be added, some steps may be
5 omitted, and the order of the steps may be re-arranged.

What is claimed is:

1. A method for transmitting scheduling requests 306 from a mobile terminal 302 to a base station 304, the method comprising:

5 (a) transmitting a first scheduling request (SR) 306 from the mobile terminal 302 to the base station 304 in response to first data becoming available for transmission from the mobile terminal 302 to the base station 304;

10 (b) after transmitting the first SR 306, receiving at the mobile terminal 302 a scheduling grant (SG) 310 transmitted from the base station 304;

(c) in response to receiving the SG 310, transmitting from the mobile terminal 302 to the base station 304 transmit buffer status information 314; and

15 (d) while at least some of the first data is waiting to be transmitted to the base station 304 and after transmitting the buffer status information 314, but prior to transmitting any subsequent SRs 306 to the base station 304, further performing the steps of:

20 (d1) determining whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred; and

(d2) if a triggering event has occurred, then, in response to determining that the triggering event has occurred, at a next opportunity, transmitting a second SR 306 to the base station 304.

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2. The method according to claim 1, wherein the step of determining whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred comprises comparing the transmit buffer status information 314 transmitted to the base station 304 with new
30 information concerning the status of the transmit buffer.

3. The method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the step of determining whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred comprises determining whether second data that is available for transmission from the mobile terminal 302 to the base station 304 has a higher priority than the first data, wherein the second data became available for transmission to the base station 304 after the first SR 306 was transmitted.

4. The method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the step of determining whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred comprises determining whether the amount of time that has elapsed since the first SR 306 was transmitted exceeds a threshold.

5. The method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the step of determining whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred comprises determining whether the difference between the current amount of data in a transmit buffer and a previous, non-zero amount of data that was in the transmit buffer exceeds a threshold.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred consists of:

(a) determining whether second data that became available for transmission to the base station 304 after the first SR 306 was transmitted has a higher priority than the first data;

(b) determining whether the amount of time that has elapsed since the first SR 306 was transmitted exceeds a threshold; and

(c) determining whether the difference between the current amount of data in a transmit buffer and a previous, non-zero amount of data that was in the transmit buffer exceeds a threshold.

5 7. The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred consists of:

10 (a) determining whether second data that became available for transmission to the base station 304 after the first SR 306 was transmitted has a higher priority than the first data; and

 (b) determining whether the amount of time that has elapsed since the first SR 306 was transmitted exceeds a threshold.

15 8. The method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the SR 306 is a one bit message.

20 9. The method according to any of the preceding claims, wherein the thresholds are configured in the mobile terminal 302 by the base station 304 through radio resource control (RRC) signaling.

25 10. The method according to any of the preceding claims, further comprising transmitting an SR 306 at a next available opportunity every time that data arrives to an empty transmit buffer in the mobile terminal 302.

30 11. The method according to any of the preceding claims, further comprising receiving at the mobile terminal 302 a HARQ ACK transmitted from the base station 304 after transmitting from the mobile terminal 302 to the base station 304 the transmit buffer

status information 314 and storing the ACK in the mobile terminal 302.

12. A mobile terminal 302, comprising:

5 a transmit buffer 702; and

a data processor 706, wherein the data processor 706 is configured to:

(a) cause the mobile terminal 302 to transmit a first scheduling request (SR) 306 to a base station 304 in response to data arriving at an empty transmit buffer in the mobile terminal 302;

(b) cause the mobile terminal 302 to transmit to the base station 304 transmit buffer status information 314 in response to receiving a scheduling grant (SG) 310 from the base station 304; and

(c) perform steps (c1)-(c2) while at least some of the first data is waiting to be transmitted to the base station 304 and after transmitting the buffer status information 314, but prior to transmitting any subsequent SRs 306 to the base station 304: (c1) determine whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred; and (c2) cause the mobile terminal 302 transmit a second SR 306 to the base station 304 at a next opportunity in response to determining that a triggering event has occurred.

13. The mobile terminal 302 according to claim 12, wherein the data processor 706 is configured to determine whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred by comparing the transmit buffer status information 314 transmitted to the base station 304 with new information concerning the status of the transmit buffer.

14. The mobile terminal 302 according to any one of claims 12 - 13 wherein the data processor 706 is configured to determine whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred by determining whether second data that became available for transmission to the base station 304 after the first SR 306 was transmitted has a higher priority than the first data.

15. The mobile terminal 302 according to any one of claims 12-14, wherein the data processor is configured to determine whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred by determining whether the amount of time that has elapsed since the first SR 306 was transmitted exceeds a threshold.

16. The mobile terminal 302 according to any one of claims 12-15, wherein the data processor 706 is configured to determine whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred by determining whether the difference between the current amount of data in a transmit buffer 702 and a previous, non-zero amount of data that was in the transmit buffer 702 exceeds a threshold.

17. The mobile terminal 302 according to any one of claims 12-16, wherein the message indicating that a triggering event has not occurred is a one bit message.

18. The mobile terminal 302 according to any one of claims 12-17, wherein the SR 306 is a one bit message.

19. A mobile terminal 302, comprising:

(a) means for transmitting a first scheduling request (SR) 306 to a base station 304 in response to an empty transmit buffer in the mobile terminal 302 receiving data;

(b) means for receiving a scheduling grant (SG) 310 transmitted from the base station 304;

(c) means for transmitting to the base station 304 transmit buffer status information 314 in response to receiving the SG 310;

5 (d) triggering event detection means 706 for determining whether a scheduling request triggering event has occurred, wherein the triggering event detection means 706 is configured to perform the determination while at least some of the data is waiting to be transmitted to the base station 304; and

10 (e) means for transmitting to the base station 304, at a next opportunity, a second SR 306 in response to determining that a scheduling request triggering event has occurred.

20. The mobile terminal 302 according to claim 19, wherein

15 triggering event detections means 706 comprises means for comparing 708 the transmit buffer status information 314 transmitted to the base station 304 with new information concerning the status of the transmit buffer.

20 21. The mobile terminal 302 according claims 19-20, wherein the triggering event detections means 706 comprises means 708 for determining whether second data that is available for transmission from the mobile terminal 302 to the base station 304 has a higher priority than the first data, wherein the second data became

25 available for transmission to the base station 304 after the first SR 306 was transmitted.

22. The mobile terminal 302 according to claims 19-21, wherein the triggering event detections means 706 comprises means

30 708 for determining whether the amount of time that has elapsed since the first SR 306 was transmitted exceeds a threshold.

23. The mobile terminal 302 according to claims 19-22,
wherein the triggering event detections means 706 comprises means
708 for determining whether the difference between the current
5 amount of data in a transmit buffer and a previous, non-zero
amount of data that was in the transmit buffer exceeds a threshold.

24. A method performed by a base station 304 for granting
uplink resources to mobile terminals 302, the method comprising:

10 allocating an uplink resource to a first mobile terminal 302,
thereby enabling the first mobile terminal 302 to transmit data to
the base station 304;

receiving an SR 306 from a second mobile terminal 302 while
the first mobile terminal 302 is utilizing the uplink resource;

15 reallocating the uplink resource to the second mobile
terminal 302 in response to receiving the SR 306;

receiving from the second mobile terminal 302 information
related to the priority of the data in the second mobile station
that is waiting to be transmitted to the base station 304;

20 comparing the priority of the first mobile terminal's data to
the priority of the second mobile terminal's data using respective
priority information;

reallocating the uplink resource to the first mobile terminal
302 in response to determining that the first mobile terminal 302
25 has higher priority data than the second mobile terminal 302;

receiving a subsequent SR 306 from the second mobile terminal
302, wherein the subsequent SR 306 is received after receiving the
priority information from the second mobile terminal 302 and
before receiving any other data priority information from the
30 second mobile terminal 302; and

reallocating the uplink resource to the second mobile terminal 302 in response to receiving the subsequent SR 306.

25. The method of claim 24, further comprising: receiving a
5 plurality of messages from the second mobile terminal 302 after
reallocating the uplink resource to the first mobile terminal 302
in response to determining that the first mobile terminal 302 has
higher priority data than the second mobile terminal 302 and prior
to receiving the subsequent SR 306 from the second mobile terminal
10 302, wherein each of the plurality of messages indicates that the
second mobile terminal 302 has not detected a scheduling request
triggering event.

26. A communication system comprising a mobile terminal 302
15 according to any one claims 12-23.